
Fitness Tips

by Cari Draft Elliott, BS, CPT - ACE-Certified Personal Trainer

HELP! I have knee pain!

***Question:** I run once or twice a week and have recently begun having pain in one knee, about halfway through my run, and it's just behind the kneecap on the outside of my knee. When I saw my doctor, he took x-rays and told me that I had "tracking issues" with my patella -- he pretty much shuffled me out the door and told me to do some leg lifts and take ibuprofen to ease the pain. I feel lost and think maybe I should see another doctor. Suggestions?*

Answer: A tracking problem usually refers to the fact that the patella (knee cap) stays in place in front of the knee, but it no longer remains centered in the front part of the femur (the bone in your thigh) known as the trochlear groove of the femur. If you're ready to get proactive about your situation, the first thing you need to do is look at what the cause of your pain could be. Is it possible you are developing arthritis in your knee? What about bursitis or tendonitis? Hop on the internet and compare your symptoms to those you find online; narrow down the cause and attack the root of the problem!

In the case of one of my fitness clients, we found that she had "chondromalacia" of her patella and her most common symptom was a dull, aching pain behind her kneecap, in the front of her knee. The root problem was her worn-out athletic shoes that weren't meant to support her pronated feet. Very easy to treat with new athletic shoes and she's made a full recovery. (I recommend going to a store like Running Circles in Grand Haven or Gazelle Sports in Grand Rapids or Holland. The people there will look at your gait and can tell you which shoe brands are best for your situation.)

Your specific treatment will depend upon what the cause of your pain is. Ice and heat application can help with some pain, while stretching and strengthening the muscles surrounding the knee can help with other types of pain. I've found Vitamin C to be beneficial in some cases. If you are unsure of your particular diagnosis, always seek medical help in addition to doing your own research!

Cari Draft Elliott is an ACE-Certified Personal Trainer who makes "house calls"! Please check out her website at www.oneononefitgirl.com and email your questions to cari@oneononefitgirl.com.
